

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 01782 240810Z
ACTION EA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 1782

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, TW
SUBJECT: CONFISCATION OF BOOK ON ELECTIONS

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. MARCH 21 INDEPENDENCE EVENING POST REPORTS THAT A BOOK ON HSU HSIN-LIANG'S SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN FOR MAGISTRATE OF TAOYUAN COUNTY LAST NOVEMBER WAS CONFISCATED BY THE AUTHORITIES ON MARCH 18 AFTER PUBLISHING BUT BEFORE DISTRIBUTION. THE BOOK WAS JOINTLY WRITTEN BY CAMPAIGN AIDES LIN CHENG-CHIEH (2651/2973/2638) AND CHANG FU-CHUNG (1728/1381/1813). THE REPORT COMMENTS THAT ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL BOOKS ON LAST YEAR'S LOCAL ELECTIONS PUBLISHED, NONE HAS BEEN AS DETAILED AND AUTHORITATIVE AS THIS ONE, AND THE REPORT CLAIMS TO HAVE LEARNED THAT THE BOOK WAS CONFISCATED BECAUSE IT WENT AGAINST ANTI-COMMUNIST NATIONAL POLICY, AND WOULD CONFUSE THE PUBLIC.

END UNCLASSIFIED.

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2. AN INDEPENDENT LEGISLATOR TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER RECENTLY THAT HE AND A LAWYER INTIMATE WITH INDEPENDENTS
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WERE PRESENT AT THE PRINTER'S IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MARCH 18 WHEN THE AUTHORITIES CAME TO SEIZE THE BOOKS. HE CLAIMS THAT THEY STALLED THE AUTHORITIES FOR FIVE HOURS WITH TECHNICAL CHALLENGES TO THE LEGALITY OF THE SEIZURE PROCEDURES, BUT THAT THE BOOKS WERE FINALLY TAKEN BY FORCE MAJEURE. THE LEGISLATOR AND LAWYER CONSIDERED LEGAL ACTION, BUT REJECTED

IT ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT MIGHT LAND THE TWO AUTHORS--
BOTH STUDENTS--IN GREATER DIFFICULTIES.
(NEITHER ONE HAS BEEN DETAINED, AND LEGISLATOR
IS ANXIOUS THAT STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS--HE
CLAIMS THERE WERE SOME FIFTY ACTIVE STUDENTS WHO
PARTICIPATED IN THE NOVEMBER 1977 CAMPAIGNING--NOT BE
NIPPED IN THE BUD.)

3. DESPITE ITS CONFISCATION, THE BOOK IS LIKELY TO
HAVE A LIMITED UNDERGROUND CIRCULATION. LEGISLATOR
HAS SEVERAL HUNDRED COPIES WHICH HE WILL DOUBTLESS
DISTRIBUTE TO SYMPATHIZERS. HIS BELIEF (WHICH WE
SHARE) IS THAT THE BOOK WAS CONFISCATED BECAUSE OF
ITS DETAILED PHOTOS OF TAOYUAN ELECTION ACTIVITIES
(INCLUDING THE CHUNGLI RIOT), BECAUSE IT MIGHT ENCOURAGE
GREATER STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVISM, AND BECAUSE OF
EMBARRASSING STORIES OF ESTABLISHMENT EFFORTS TO
DEFEAT THEM. END CONFIDENTIAL.
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